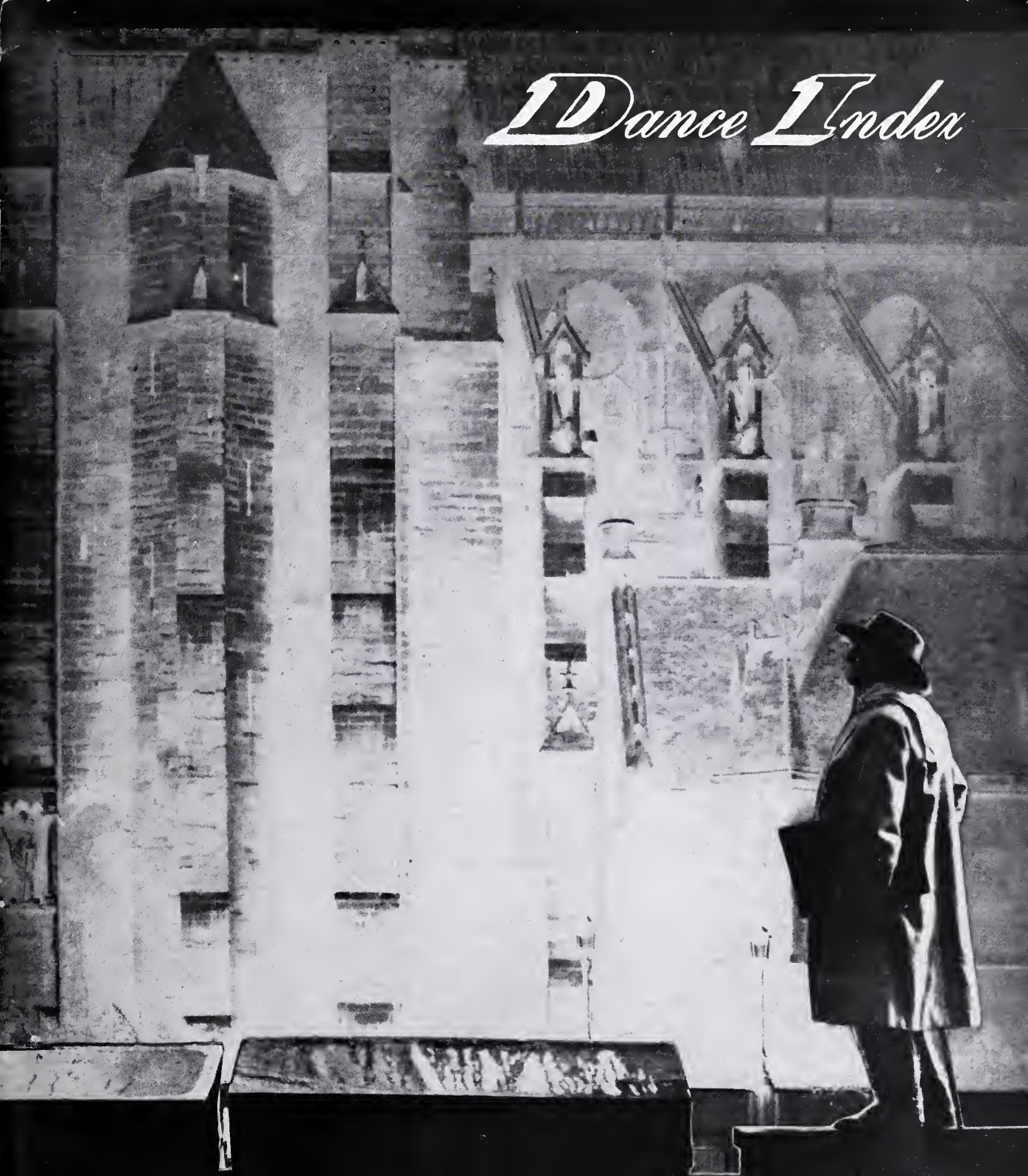


Dance Index



GORDON CRAIG and THE DANCE



Isadora Duncan, a pastel drawing by Gordon Craig, 1904. From the collection of George Chaffee.

Dance Index

Founders

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN
BAIRD HASTINGS
PAUL MAGRIEL

Editor

DONALD WINDHAM

Comment

Gordon Craig, an Englishman, son of the great actress Ellen Terry, was born in 1872 and received his early practical training in the theatre as an actor for seven years in the company of Henry Irving. Besides being a great theorist and philosopher of the theatre he produced Hamlet, Macbeth and other of Shakespeare's plays in cities as far apart as London, Moscow and New York, founded *The Mask*, generally acknowledged to have been the best magazine ever published on the theatre, and contributed to it from 1908 to 1930, is the author of numerous books on the theatre, and is famed as a designer, etcher, lithographer and woodcutter. He founded and directed the Gordon Craig School of the Theatre in Florence, Italy.

The articles by Gordon Craig printed in this issue of *Dance Index* all deal directly with the dance; usually with some definite artist or company. But Craig mainly treats the theatre as a whole and does not break dancing apart from acting, designing and producing. He has always wanted the theatre to produce a unified single art, and has always objected to the dominance of the personality of any individual performer. Perhaps his greatest kinship to the dance has been in his insistence upon the importance of *motion* in the theatre. He has often cited the theatre as a place, not for "hearing 30,000 words babbled out in two hours," but as a "place

for seeing shows," and pointed out the derivation of these two words:

Theatre — a French word, derived from Latin; the Latin word from Greek. Middle French *theatre*; Cosgrave's Dictionary, ed. 1660. Derived from the Latin theatrum, derived from the Greek θέατρον, a place for seeing shows, derived from the Greek θεάομαι, I see. Compare θέα, a sight; see Prellwitz.

Drama — a Latin word, derived from Greek; the Latin *drama* derived from the Greek δράμα (stem δράματ), an act, a drama. derived from the Greek δράω, I perform. Compare Lithuanian *darau*, I make. (Root DAR. Derivatives, dramatic (from δραματ); etc.

The modern concert dance owes much of its formation to the art of Craig as well as to Duncan, Wigman, Denishawn, Dalcroze and Delsarte. In her autobiography Duncan said, "He was the inspirer of the whole trend of the modern theatre . . . Without him we should still be back in the old realistic scenery, every leaf shimmering on the trees, all the houses with doors opening and shutting." Outside of his work as a designer, his theories and writings have served as inspiration much as did those of Whitman and Nietzsche.

D. W.

The cover is a photograph of Gordon Craig.
Subscription: 25c a copy; \$2.50 by the year.

Copyright 1943, Dance Index — Ballet Caravan, Inc. — 637 Madison Avenue, New York City
Vol. II. No. 8, August, 1943

5

THE RUSSIAN BALLET by GORDON CRAIG

I very much object to myself having written an article which gives anything but the most overwhelming praise to my friend Nijinsky. I object on personal grounds; for I not only admire that amazing genius, having a considerable appreciation of his personal qualities, but besides this feel nothing but good fellowship towards him. To chat with him in six languages over a cigar is one of the most delightful experiences life has to offer.

What then can permit me to allow such an article as this number contains to pass?

My friend Diaghilev too. What of him? He will be awfully offended at what I have said of his charming group of dancers, for I do not know a more genial man on the face of this earth; and if he believes that the body produces finer works than the soul produces . . . why shouldn't he believe it? I at this moment and in this Prelude, not as Editor of this Journal, but as a friend of his and free once more, can find no earthly* reason why he should not believe it.

I do not know whether I have mentioned Made-moiselle Karsavina in the article. I shall not look at the wretched thing again . . . that impertinent article! In fact, I have a very good mind to take serious action against the writer . . . except that action is, according to Rimbaud, "only a way of spoiling something."

But I suppose Mlle. Karsavina will easily believe

*NOTE: This is a slang phrase which in England is only used among artists and by the lower classes. I suppose it is to show the good terms they are on with the earth. Got you there, Pedant of the "New" School which we now know is the "Old" School!

me when I tell her that I have sat entranced to see her blowing a trumpet round the stage . . . a trumpet which she does not blow, but which is blown for her by a gentleman in evening dress. I should like to see her blowing the trumpet whenever I remember that passage of the charming music of that amazing "genius" for "theatrical" music, Stravinsky, and would have given anything to meet her . . . as they say . . . to have talked with her for half an hour . . . , an hour . . . , two hours, three, four, five, or ten hours on the difficulties she has to encounter in her work, the defeats she has encountered, and the hopes and fears with which she looks forward to the future. Anything . . . everything . . . to show that I am a human being and that my only thought is of human beings as human beings.

But, oh, you good people all of you, especially you dear Russians both of St. Petersburg and Moscow, . . . when the devil are we all going to wake up in the Theatre? No, seriously . . . WHEN ARE WE GOING TO WAKE UP?

That tin trumpet of Stravinsky, even when a Karasavina pretends to blow upon it, will not even wake up a cat.

You have done marvels, . . . we all know it, . . . most of all do I know it; the most marvelous tricks that can be done. But when is the whole family going to wake up and together create one little thing in a moment of inspiration, . . . a thing of inspiration, pure and inspired? A little Law to guide an Art.

This, this most difficult of all things we have forgotten to attend to: We are afraid! That is the reason. We are afraid of time . . . it would take us years of experiment and lives of thought and oceans

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This issue was accomplished with the cooperation of Mr. George Amberg, curator, Dance Archives of The Museum of Modern Art, Mr. Sheldon Cheney who supplied some of Craig's notes and Craig's copy of *Lady Diana Goes to the Ballet*, Sally Kamin of the Kamin Dance Bookshop, and *The Mask*, *The London Dancing Times*, and *The English Review* where some of these articles originally appeared.

of feeling, and we find we are poor in thought and feeling . . . oh, oh, oh!

We are all geniuses; we know that we are all wonderful beings, . . . that goes without saying. But what is not yet evident is, . . . what have we found that we can place by the side of the pyramid, . . . that will compare with one of its steps?

What we lack, says Flaubert, is *Conscience*! I know we have in our possession as great a secret as lies hidden in the Pyramids. Well then, my dears, let us whisper over that secret together.

All the boys and girls who shall spring from us must be united together and know that secret. There is not another moment to lose if it is to be clear to them twenty years from today. I shall eat, drink and be merry meantime, . . . and I hope you will eat as much, drink much more and try to be as merry. But I swear I will drop a seed of that secret before I am finished, and I wish that each of you would drop one too. Then we should have GROWTH.

I put no query here, nor have I any doubts myself as to the value of the Body or the value of the Soul.

I would not undervalue either.

But in the creating of some things it is certain the Soul must be subservient to the Body; in the creation of others the Body must as certainly be subservient to the Soul. What an alliance when each can obey the other, keeping its place . . . holding its peace . . . in time and in tune to the force of the other . . . the Beloved.

There is no such thing as union which excludes command or obedience. Each honors the other.

I will take the first six examples of great works of art. See the Pyramid . . . the head of Amenemhat III . . . or the painting of the Buddha and the Thirty-three Bosatsous made by the priest Eschin. Look at the bronze statue of Dia-Butsu at Kamakura; or upon the towers of Tuscany and of Ireland, or at the needlework of a mother on the socks of a child; and I swear to you that these things were made when the soul was working released from the tyranny of the body . . . a body which knows it may claim the right in due time to command the soul.

These truths are just what unreasonable people wish to deny. They will not accept the simplest natural truths. The great hum going round the earth today about uniting the Body and the Soul in smug relationship leads to the building of abominable houses, wretched palaces and meaningless churches; produces the foolish paintings, the trembling books, and the awful music.

Both Soul and Body are helpless to create Art nowadays, for they have been joined, tied, rivetted together by a lie, and equal liberties allowed to each, equal powers and qualities assigned to each.

Hence all works of Art which are the creation of the Soul and nothing but the Soul are looked upon

as "queer" and "quaint", . . . those are the words which people use today towards works of Art which show us signs that the Soul made them.

"Glorious," "wonderful," "brilliant," these are the words used towards the works of Art made by the Body today.

By these words the mob excuses its own ignorance and comforts its cowardice . . . for the mob, fearing the individual, stands as much for the Body today as it has always done: the mob, . . . that which is everlastingly fickle and detests the Soul, . . . the inspirer . . . that which alone remains unconquerable through faith.

And so through its blind hatred of its master the mob today comes to find the workings of the Soul incomprehensible, whereas it recognises in the workings of the Body an experience of yesterday.

If Art, the voice of Revelation, were concerned solely with recording what has been, perhaps there would be nothing to be said. But Art is most of all concerned with Tomorrow and the Horizon.

The Pyramids were not only records; they were and still are always pointing towards the Future. The Soul of Man runs easily up the great stairs and in the topmost silence is aware of Truth.

It will be asked why some of the works of Art may not be created by the Body? Why should there not be a great deal of comfortable work so as to make the world more "gemütlich", with here and there a nice blaze of sensuous stuff too? Why not? . . . why not?

But what a ridiculous thing to call for . . . what a ridiculous thing to be always calling for and to get excited about when it comes!

For that comfortable and sensuous type of work is all over the place.

It pours out of the Theatre in streams. The novels are soaked with it. Painting bubbles with it. The music which it makes smokes and steams. There is no question but that there will always be sufficient of this. Hence it is needful that we look for the other, and call for the other until we get it.

So much as Prelude to my Notes on the Russian Ballet. The Russian Ballet is essentially the "Art" which is created by the Body. Its perfection is physical. Its appeal is to our senses, not through them.*

Having excited them it has done its task. It makes no further effort. It is sensuous art and not spiritual, and is just as far removed from Architecture and Music as the Body is from the Soul, and I wish, and millions of people wish, to see the Theatre give birth to an art as spiritual as music or architecture.

*NOTE: "This life's five windows of the soul
Distort the heavens from pole to pole
And leads you to believe a lie,
When you see *with*, not *through* the
eye."

William Blake. "The Everlasting Gospel."

(From *The Mask*, Volume Six, Number One — July 1913)

MARGIN NOTES by GORDON CRAIG

(These notes were made by Craig in his bound copy of the French illustrated theatrical review *Commoedia Illustrée*, for the early seasons of the Russian Ballet in Paris from 1909 to 1914. Craig

made these notes in pencil in the margins of the pages during 1913. There are later comments indicated. These Volumes are now in the Dance Archives of the Museum of Modern Art.)

1. (*In the front of the Volume.*)

1911 to 1913 — Showing perhaps (better than) as well as, any other document exactly what was happening in the new movement as expressed by the following men and women:

Fokine, *Nijinski*, *Karsavina*, *Mad. Fokina*
Bakst, *Roerich*, *Visconti**(?), *Bohm*
D'Annunzio (?), *Antoine*, *Ida Rubenstein*.
Rheinhardt, *Maria Carmi* (*Princess Matcha-*
belli)
De Max
Jean Morax
Bernhardt (?), *Tellegen*.

(I question some of these as representing anything in the new movement. The names *italicized* are the principal figures.)

(Note how Meyerhold was overshadowed in these years — in Paris!)

E. G. C. 1935

Now we have at a glance more clear idea *how much* of (and what class of thing) the new movement got into the great city of Paris.

We know that Isadora Duncan got in and left her mark but her presence was unable to prevent the pandemonium which a big city seems to crave for.

But there are some important people who did not go to Paris:

Stanislavsky's company of actors
The Irish Players from Dublin
Dalcroze's company of dancers

Still, even all these as visitors would have amounted only to a passing fashion and made Parisians "rave" for a month or two.

But Appia, not a word of him, and he is the greatest scenic figure of the new movement. Of E. G. C. we do not hear either — not to be with



A Woodcut by Gordon Craig, 1910. From the Print Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

*NOTE: Scenic designer: Designed decor for Fauré's opera *Penelope*, Monte Carlo. 1913.

D'Annunzio and Bakst in Paris is lucky. To be left with Appia and the others is a good sign.

This "new movement" amounts to nothing when you've considered carefully what (there) is in this volume.

Why nothing (?). I will tell you in two words.

It's a *new theatricalism* which the whole thing amounts to.

—a new falsity
—it is beliefless—

In this volume you can see what their method was.

They thought they could imitate so well as to deceive us into believing it was creation.

They went to see the Indian statue's pictures dancers and did an Indian affair.

They went to see the Egyptian statue's pictures dancers and did an Egyptian affair:

They went to see the Grecian statue's pictures dancers and did a Greek affair.

They went to see the Turkish statue's pictures dancers and did a Turkish affair.

They went to see the Italian statue's pictures dancers and did an (Italian) affair.

The list is as long as the list of nationalities.

They had no belief in themselves and in principles.

They put on and put off anyone's elses' *belief*.

We will do it "like this" they said on Monday

We will do it "like that" they said on Tuesday

They could do it anyway.

They were not doubtful if they could manage it.

They were sure of themselves, very.

Very sure they could disguise anything.

How far were they successful(?)

They disguised everything and created nothing

We believe that is to have failed.

(E.G.C. — May 1915.)

2. Notes on illustrations in the text.

On Bakst's costume design of Ida Rubenstein, martyred as Saint Sebastien. *Sickness*.

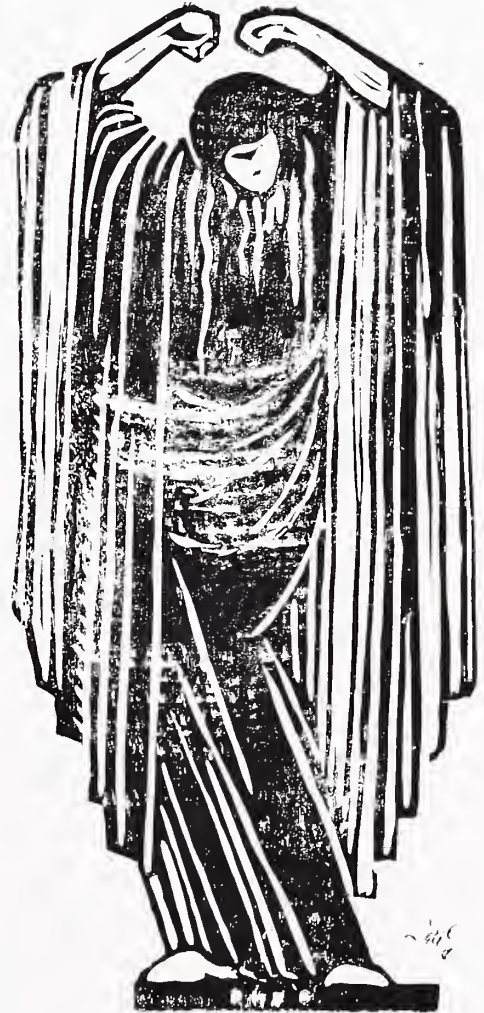
On Bakst's color sketches for *Le Miracle de Saint Sebastien*: *Compare photograph*:

All is lost.

Costume is not dress (but only) a cover: Costumes is that which uncovers the Soul.

The flesh and bones are the costume of the Soul. Reveal them then — without exposing that which is mute and must remain so.

E. G. C., 1911



A Woodcut by Gordon Craig, 1908. From the Print Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

On four photos (Bert) of Nijinsky and Karsavina in *Le Spectre de la Rose*:

These four photos are charming indeed and represent all that is best in the Russian Ballet.

And yet Karsavina seems to be the very essence of insincerity and of vanity of a dull kind.

— but Nijinsky!!!

On a photo of Vera Fokina:

Possibly the best brains of the group. Her fat hands and whole person well under control and does not make mistakes.

On a photo of a Dancer designed by Leon Bakst for the Paquin (dressmaking) Pavilion at the Exposition of Turin 1911:

The awful effects of following the footsteps of Isadora Duncan.

The mixing of art - dressmakers - royalty - naked ladies-dancing and prostitution:

If pleasant things each in their own place how unpleasant when mixed in this friendly fashion.

All for commerce.

This kind of thing it is which makes us hate and wage war on commercialism. And this is only the fringe.

(See illustration of these designs with Craig's notes — p. 105)

On a cover in color of *Commoedia Illustré* for June 1, 1912, showing Karsavina and Bolm in costume for "*Thalmar*":

Senseless if you will consider it for a moment.

On Nijinsky's costumes for *Le Dieu Bleu* (Bakst):

Compare this first with the Indian plate 30 in Coomeraswamy. (The Mirror of gesture) after with the photographs facing (Nijinsky photographed in the finished costume).*

On a color plate for the decor of *Le Dieu Bleu* (Bakst):

The worms on the twig are rather unconvincing. (The sketch) Not a bit like the result achieved. I saw it in 1912. E. G. C.

On photos of dancers in costumes for *Le Dieu Bleu*:

*NOTE: Craig's intention was to show how little the dead photo resembled the highly stylized sketch.

Some good dresses.

On the dancer Baranovitch II:

Stupid woman, good dress.

On sketches by Roerich for *Le Sacre du Printemps*:

Roerich is the best of the Russians as decorators of painted scenes and costumes.

On the description with illustrations of *La Pisanella* or *La Mort Parfumée*, words by D'Annunzio (Italian), music by da Parma (Italian), decor and costumes by Bakst (Russian), dances by Fokine (Russian), musical direction by Inghelbrecht (German)

And interesting this series of pictures, for it shows how much or how little the great Meyerhold could do without his own theatre, his own company and his liberty.

E. G. C., 1915

On a review by Louis Delluc of *La Pisanella* (20 June, 1913)

"Is there nothing about Meyerhold?"

(The review had mentioned all the collaborators except the director-in-chief.)

3. Notes by E. G. C. in *The Art of Nijinsky* by Geoffrey Whitworth (1913), with Gordon Craig's bookplate. Florence 1913.

On a quotation from the article on Ballet published in the Encyclopedia Britannica (1910 page 1).

Only in an atmosphere of ceremony, courtesy and chivalry can the dance maintain itself in perfection. Right. (Italics of E. G. C.)

Page 9: The young Nijinsky soon began to manifest the character of genius. (Italics of E. G. C.)

and later on he blazed them by deserting the ranks of the Russian Ballet in Diaghilev's personal direction.

Page 17 and 18:

Nor must we forget the liberating force which sprang from the art of Isadora Duncan, whose heroic practice has done far more than any precepts of philosophy to widen our ideas as to the intellectual and spiritual possibilities of the dance. (Italics E. G. C.)

Not that — Isadora Duncan has not dealt with the dance intellectually, nor spiritually — but personally. The age saw to that!



A page from the *Comedia Illustré*, June 1911, showing dress designs from the Paquin Pavilion at the Turin Exposition of 1911, which were inspired by Duncan's costumes. Gordon Craig's notes are in the margin.

THE JAVANESE BALLET by GORDON CRAIG

(A Review of "*La Danse dans le Theatre Javanais*" by Th. B. Van Lelyveld. Librairie Floury, 136 Boulevard St. Germain, Paris. 1931)

This book on the Javanese theatrical dance is really two books in one: one is the book of the words, and the other is a book of pictures. The forty-eight plates will say more, to a serious dancer, than any words, and will say it more clearly. To other people, the pictures will say less. For them, the text.

On the faces of these Javanese dancers is an expression that is fretful, petulant and childlike. It is the petulance around the eyes and brows which is most marked in nearly all the dancers; and more often than not the chin recedes, giving the face quite the look of a spoilt child. According to our standards of personality, these creatures possess none whatever: as for character, they are characterless: to us they are not gracious, for they seem to show no sign of wishing to please.

They do not dance according to the rules of European dancing, for, to begin with, they keep their feet flat upon the ground. They are not like the dancers of most other lands, because they are clothed: only the feet are naked, and the arms, shoulders and face — for rarely does one cover his face with a mask, though the head-dresses worn are elaborate.

They do not grin, nor look empty nothings at the spectator: they are unconcerned by the man who "pays for his seat," or the impresario who would wish to teach them the arts of vulgarity so as to get them to *click!*

They look down, as a rule: if the head is raised up, still they look down and sideways, more often than not.

When grouping together they do not arrange themselves in such straight lines, such symmetrical patterns, that they can form the large letters, J A V A, when seen from a grand-stand, at a distance, at a tattoo — because they have no tattoo, and they do not try to imitate living letters. Their dance is dance, and to them, dance is a sacred thing, not a show.

But there we are again: the word "sacred" to them does not mean what it has come to mean to Europeans; so it is not a matter of white wings, upturned eyes, mutterings and mumblings devoid of humanity, and a general appearance of the sickly . . . nor is it expressed by savage rage or drunken whirlings, as in the dances of the Western Indians, or the dance of the Bacchantes in Greece . . . nor by an incessant wriggling of the stomach, as in another part of the world. Neither, in their dance, does the back become the front, as in the negro convention so familiar to Parisiens.

There is nothing in the Javanese dance that can exclude it from being at the summit, with the rarest dancing the world has ever dreamed.

And yet it is no dream: it is a reality. Is it ready then for exploitation on the music-hall stage in London?

These are all Kings' dancers of whom I speak, who are portrayed in this book, and it is out of the question that they should appear on a music-hall stage. So the impresario, that ass who cheapens every rare thing to fit into his objectionably cheap programme, will dub them "unpractical" and "highbrow."

Mr. Van Lelyveld, in his first chapter, tells us that the Sanskrit words for "drama," "mimic," "actor," and the name of the chief group of Indian epic dramas, all derive from the root word meaning "to dance." The Javanese dance came from India — the Hindus took it to Java before India had become westernized. Once in Java, it has been preserved, so we can see what it is that India has lost. For the author says:

"In India itself, except in certain southern districts, the decay of culture and the European influence have destroyed all but a few vestiges of an art of rhythmic movement. Only in Java does the theatre still exist in its most perfect form . . . the dance in its original state: symbolic, expressive, and wonderfully beautiful."

What would the Scotch say, for example, who know how to dance their reel, if the silly sort of imitation Scottish dance that we see at a music-hall were to be held representative of their grand national dance? What is the good of having bled with Wallace if, some five hundred years later, your descendants, "the Sisters Wallis," become a side-show with a dancing bear? — for then a good deal more than sixpence has gone bang. Such a happening proclaims that the whole country is ready to go bang. I am told that the Scots have preserved their glorious dances, to the honour of their race, and that people who would degrade our English stage do not search for Dianas among the artists' models in Skye.

The preservation of the Indian dance in Java reminds me how useful — right away from beautiful or noble or anything else — how useful the dance is. It serves, as a straw does, to show which way the wind blows. It is such an easy, useful little thing to preserve a dance. A dance is like a good barometer in a house — you know when to take out an umbrella in time to avoid a drenching, or when to take out a sunshade. It is such a sensitive little instrument, the dance, that it can tell you with precision when your nation is just going a little bit too much



Dance of the Sarimpis. From *La Danse dans le Theatre Javanais*, by Th. B. Van Lelyveld, Paris 1931.

to the right, or a little bit too much to the left. Whether on perceiving the first decline of their dance, the Javanese will realize that their country is about to enter a crisis in its history, and will be able to avert that crisis, is a question that I cannot answer. The author of this book, who has observed the coming to Java of the cinema, the wireless, and the other idiocies of our beautiful civilization — most which have contributed to the disastrous situation from which we are just emerging — the author knits his brows. He doesn't like the look of it at all.

The rules and conditions of the Javanese dance vary a good deal in the different provinces. In Jogya (where the Sultan's brother, Prince Arya Souryadiningrat, has done much to preserve and support the dance) women and girls take no part in the theatrical dances. At Solo, on the contrary, not only the women's parts, but some male rôles, are taken by girls. At both Jogya and Solo, the young princesses take part in certain ceremonial dances which are religious rather than theatrical; and the dance plays a great part in the education of all these children of royal and noble families.

At Jogya, the theatrical performances last for several days sometimes, and certain rôles have to be doubled. At Solo, the performances are short.

There are no special theatre buildings — the performances are given in the open air, or under a roof with open sides; until recently no platform was used, but these are now beginning to be adopted.

The costumes are very splendid, and there is little or no décor, though a backcloth is now sometimes used.

These theatrical dancers are never professionals, and many of these too are the children of the princes and nobles.

Each gesture in a dance expresses a certain action or emotion, and when a point of the story is to be emphasized, the gestures which explain it are repeated several times. The Javanese spectators, even the children, know and understand every movement made by the dancers . . . except that the meaning of certain gestures of the hands has been lost during the centuries.

The Javanese dancers do not point their toes; the foot is placed flat on the ground, and lifted horizontally. When the foot is raised, the body remains upright, and the knee of the other leg is bent.

The eyes follow the direction of the hands and feet. The head is carried at the same angle throughout the dance — its position on the neck does not change, even if the head has to be violently flung

back. The nobler the character a dancer is representing, the more does he bend his head, in token of his simplicity, modesty and thoughtfulness. In each rôle, the position of the head, like the movements, is laid down by tradition.

The author says:

"If we grant the possibility of imitating, with grace and suppleness, the outward forms of this dance (as certain western dancers of great ability have successfully done in public, after much study) it is none the less certain that these *tours de force* can never reach the subtle beauty of the original. The difference in physical structure is, in itself, an overwhelming obstacle. Such interpretations can never be anything but mechanical copies, lacking the inspiration of the Oriental soul, which can neither be imitated nor learnt."

A warning. It is strange how many intelligent European and American dancers take pictures,

photographs, vase-paintings, statuettes, and imitate these, no matter what the period or what the land of their origin — and become Egyptian, Chinese, Indian, Persian, Scandinavian, Spanish or what not.

How sick we are of seeing the so-called "Greek poses," the so-called "Egyptian gestures," and the others! Some even go so far as to put on Egyptian dress when imitating these Egyptian gestures, or Spanish dress when pretending to be Spanish. This is all utter folly. But so much of modern European dancing is, to my way of feeling, utter folly — and when it is professedly foolish, then we are all right. The dancing clown is so genuine, the dancing faun of to-day so false. But though the clown is genuine, he ought not to be the only dancing figure, as he is to-day. Is not our fraudulent civilization able to find one genuine partner for this clown?

(From *The Dancing Times*, London, January, 1932)

MARGARET MORRIS by GORDON CRAIG

Miss Morris's book* I have not read, but I have read Mr. L. St. Senan's review of her book which appeared in the "New Criterion."

Mr. St. Senan compares pretty Miss Morris with M. Diaghilev. Was it to damn the Russian impresario that he did that? I can conceive no other intention. If you compare a rose with a plate you are obviously having a sly, if absurd, dig at the plate. If you compare even a radish with a fine antimascassar you are not laughing at the radish, and Miss Morris is after all a pretty English rose.

Had Mr. St. Senan compared Miss Morris with any other *danseuse* — with Miss Allen, or Miss Ruth St. Denis, for example — he would have done a little better. Self-trained dancers must be compared with other self-trained dancers . . . not with machinery.

Mr. St. Senan tells us that M. Diaghilev has "made history in the art of the theatre not once but over and over again." He has done no such thing. He has caused several groups of dancers to make a success over and over again. He has that knack — he is really a good impresario. But he is not the Chevalier Noverre. Only Isadora Duncan has "made history" in the Dance of this century.

Critics grow a little confusing who, for no particular reason, compare plates with flowers. M. Diaghilev does not dance, does not sing, does not act, does not, I am told, even whistle. He manipu-

lates those who dance, those who train dancers, those who design scenes, and those who direct orchestras.

He has been probably the first to lend the Impresario something which in appearance looks very like the true artist. In any other age M. Diaghilev would perhaps have attempted diplomacy and become *Valet de Chambre* to a Prince, — a great personage like M. Bachelier, *valet de chambre* to young Louis XV. His personality lends a grace to the European stage which was not possessed by M. Astruc or Phineas Barnum. I know of another theatre man who seems possessed of even more indifference, even more certainty about what he is doing; he is an Italian impresario, but he works less in the limelight than M. Diaghilev and seems in no way to be the great man nor to desire such a celebrity.

Such men can be compared for one compares them with Mr. Cochran and with M. Herbelot; but none of them can possibly be compared with Miss Morris.

Miss Morris is a very excellent dancer, suffering because Mr. St. Senan and his kind will not make a little effort to stand by her and her English faults and qualities. Is she too technical? — is she too precise? — is she too light? — is she heavy? I'm sure I do not know. But whatever she is, we could have had a Ballet of our own long ago if, instead of being ashamed of our own dancers, we had stood up for them all a great deal better. Miss Morris might long ago have developed if we had encouraged her. We did not; we never do encour-

*NOTE — Margaret Morris Dancing: by Margaret Morris and Fred Daniels — London 1926.

rage our artists, not even when the critics are throwing bricks at them.

I suppose it is bad form to encourage since it is considered good form to be ashamed of them. Good form or no, it is anyhow damn bad behavior and shows a wretched spirit to drive our stage artists, who would experiment, into finding their own little theatres and paying for them, or more or less paying, out of their own meagre purses.

For there are patrons of the Arts in London; oh, yes. They will give an artist £100, even £200 (if the artist worries sufficiently); and for that they feel themselves privileged to say to London "Yes, I am supporting her art" or, "That is my special charity."

Special fiddlesticks.

If Miss Morris is not better developed as a dancer (and Mr. St. Senan seems to feel she is not), it is his fault and the fault of those he listens to and echoes, and the fault of all those wonderful "Patrons" of the Arts in London.

How the sensible folk in London allow them to block up the road when people are trying to get on, I find hard to understand. There they are, smiling their eternal smile of self-satisfaction while

they down all that is English — if it have some talent and independence — by supporting it too feebly. Miss Morris, if she is independent, is so in spite of them.

I need not expect her to do what Taglioni did in order to appreciate what she does . . . in order to see what she could do if properly supported.

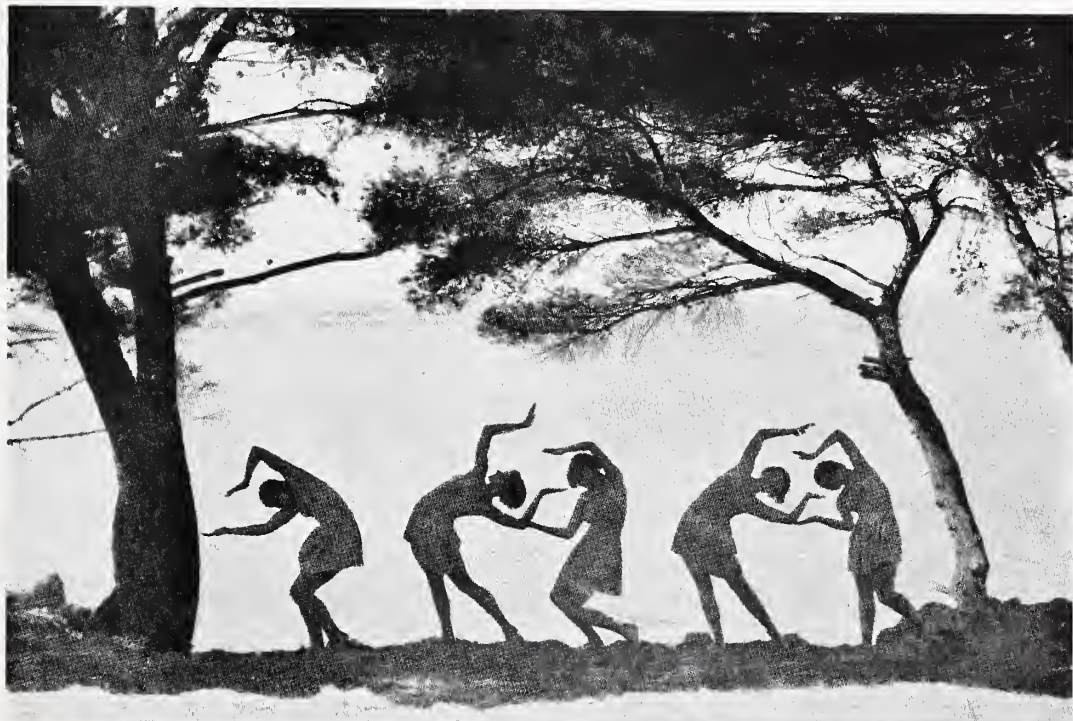
If she was first of all driven into a pseudo-artistic set it is the fault of our English critics, who fail year after year to combine and demand in a group what they are too timid to demand individually, . . . fair play, fair training, fair pay and fair opportunity for all English artists who are beginning.

Who wants merely praise or blame from critics? What critics are made for is to see first of all that the conditions under which artists are working in London are at least as good as the conditions of the East end slums.

The conditions are worse.

Who comes to inquire — to help? The Prince of Wales? . . . the Duke of York? No, the Bishop of Runtifoo.

Scepticism enquires, reports, grins, turns its back, and art is prevented.



Margaret Morris and pupils dancing. From *Margaret Morris Dancing*, Photographs by Fred Daniels, London 1926.

But M. Diaghilev, you say? Ah, M. Diaghilev! I! M. Diaghilev is from Russia; he has talents all of which I have acknowledged, all but one . . . art of raising the wind. He has that art assuredly. If Miss Morris had it you'd all be at her feet tomorrow.

Are we to suppose that Miss Morris can raise even £50 easily, we who can draw our checks for £1000 as easily as we can call a taxi and say "to the Russian Ballet?" No one has a notion how much good material is lost to the arts in England because of the sheer poverty of the artists — and their inability to pay their way.

You can not quite wear down a William Blake — he has a pencil and can afford three new brushes when he sends out for his porter — and he has a friend — one. And two rooms. But you can even make a William Blake tedious by throwing him back year after year on his last resources:

On his one friend
two Rooms
and three new brushes.

In England we make mistakes often because we don't know. We have killed and continue to kill our artists because we don't know. If we go on doing this we shall wake up one morning and know right enough and know exactly twenty-four hours too late. We shall have tried to kill the wrong artist and he will object.

I repeat that the conditions under which our artists work in England are worse than the conditions of the worst English slums.

Daily we hear of young artists who want to put an end to their existence: — they see that no one wants their work as it is — when it is good. Sometimes by God's luck some good being happens to pass along — buys a picture — or an engraving — and the lad is saved. But it's touch and go. I know several cases of this wearing down of the artists.

When they are more solid and can stand more, (Miss Morris for example) the folk think it a cue to put a greater strain on them. So they pelt them with plates, Diaghilev and other bric-à-brac.

You go to the wrong people to enquire as to the conditions of the English Artists. They tell you that all is quite well and the artists rather spoiled than otherwise. That is an untruth.

I ask for the sixtieth time in this journal for fair play for the artists — and decent pay. I ask for something to be done to dam the rush of amateurs — mostly society ladies and gentlemen — who imagine that a Miracle has happened and endowed them suddenly with powers of expression equal to that of Rachel, Fanny Elssler, Jenny Lind or Miss Elinor Wylie.

They push forward and shove rudely into places which are not theirs and are not free. American impresarios assist them: — it is such a draw to have a real Society bird, as Mr. James Glover calls them, in place of the genuine nightingale.

I ask that these people be very distinctly given the cold shoulder — and your artists a warmer welcome. It is the only fair play thing to do.

(From *The Mask*, Vol. XII, No. 4, October 1926)

BALANCHINE'S "APOLLO"

(An extract from a letter)

I then went on to Paris; there I met with another curious figure . . . a certain Englishman who styles himself the Comte d'Angleterre.

I could write a history of this man, but I doubt whether I shall have the time. An austere being devoting his time, strength and money to others, he passes almost unnoticed amongst those celebrities in Paris who are said to be somebodies.

In Paris too I came across that remarkable theatrical genius M. Diaghilev. I have never seen anyone look older than he can at 12 o'clock midday and then at 8 o'clock the same evening look and be the youngest man in the city. He invited me to his box at the Opera House to see four of his ballets . . . four on the same evening . . . ! I almost think that four is two too many.

A most enjoyable hour and a half I spent following the two first ballets, "L'Oiseau de Feu" and "Apollo," both composed by Stravinsky. I for my part preferred the "Apollo" to the other.

I can imagine no more delicate piece of work than the arrangement of the different sections of this second ballet, this "Apollo."

Everything conspires in it to cheat us — but all is done openly and beautifully.

The arrangement of this Ballet was by *Georges Balanchine*, a man of a fine creative talent. The dancers were Serge Lifar and the three ladies, Danilova, Tchernichera and Doubrovskaya, and all four enchanted me.

There was only one fault in this ballet and this one fault is the unwillingness or inability of the arranger to make his ballet in *one piece*. It was broken up into ten or twenty or thirty sections. Nature in this respect does better than he. Clouds — seas — rain storms — sciroccos — always proceed without a break; no matter what the contrasts or what the harmonies, in nature all goes on from its start to the conclusion of its performance; there is no break, there are no jerks — no goings forward only to go back — no goings round — all advances and always.

by GORDON CRAIG

And when I came to London and visited the Exhibition of Dutch Art and stood before the mighty landscape (NO. 227) by Philip Koninck I realized that great painting also proceeds from start to end in a single unbroken series of advancing waves. It may take hours for the spectator to follow these; it does in Koninck's landscape; but the rhythm never suddenly breaks — not once.

I thought this the most wonderful painting of all the 921 items of the show. Its manner is the grandest manner of Shakespeare or Bach — and this explains why hardly anyone stopped to look at it, and there must have been some 1300 people at Burlington House on the day I went in.

The Catalogue, which honors some of the artists by a word or two of mention, does not stop to speak of Koninck. He was born in 1616 and died in 1689.

The success of M. Diaghilev's Paris performances was greater than ever . . . and indeed this is not hard to understand, for it is today the best ballet in the world, and never was the troupe stronger nor the inventions of M. Diaghilev more happy.

My only reason for not waiting to see the whole four ballets is that I had had enough. I didn't want to forget the loveliness of "Apollo."

I sometimes wonder why it is that the spectators are not given two ballets and then asked to say which of the two they would like repeated. I would have called for "Apollo."

(From "A Letter on Recent Travels Through Europe" in *The Mask*, Vol. XV No. 2, April, May, June 1929.)



George Balanchine's "Apollo," London, 1928. The dancers in the London production, which directly followed the Paris presentation, were: Top — Serge Lifar and Alice Nikitina. Middle — Lifar, Nikitina, Lubov Tchernicheva and Felia Doubrovskaya. Lower — Lifar, Tchernicheva and Doubrovskaya. Photographs from *The Illustrated London Times*, July, 1928.



ISADORA DUNCAN : STUDIES FOR SIX DANCE MOVEMENTS by GORDON CRAIG

PROLOGUE

Much noise and deep restlessness
Grief and disharmony
- Is this the whole end of it ?
- The truth of it all ?
Is it so certain then that this life
Consists only of fourfold nonsense ?
Is it not far more true that this life
Is exactly the reverse, -
- Rest - joy and harmony,
Rhythm, the most certain truth -
And the expression of all this - Art ?
Is evil then, and ugliness,
Really the image of force ?
- Must restlessness be the symbol of life -
Must a noisy, trying gloom spread
Over the enchantment of things -
If these are questions, I do not ask questions -
For I have no doubts at all, -
I see calmness and beauty, the strong and sweet
Draw near in a perfect manner -
Everything gives place to the spirit,
Nothing can hinder it -
Three lines or three hundred
Give the same picture -
One tone or a staff of tones
The same melody
One step or a hundred steps
Create the same dance.
Something set down -
As a record -
Something uttered on the divine theme,
Which is so simple and only simple to comprehend -
The theme which commences
"I am happy."
And ends with
". how fair."
This is what she dances -
Never yet has she shown dark or unbearable sorrow -
Always sunshine's around her -
Even the little shadows, disappear
And flee, when she passes -
This is the real force
She springs from the Great Race -
From the Great Companions -
From the line of Sovereigns, who
Maintain the world and make it move,
- From the Courageous Giants,
- The Guardians of Beauty -
The Solvers of all Riddles.

Leipzig - 1906

Translated by George Amberg.



I



PERI

III



GLUCK



II



CHOPIN

IV



BEETHOVEN





V



STRAUSS



LADY DIANA GOES TO THE BALLET

(An article on Gordon Craig by the editor of *The English Review*.
From *The English Review*, August, 1911)

THE LADY DIANA, who was a very grand person in Society, looked up the meaning of the word "choreography," and took a party to the Russian Ballet.

"It's a new thing," she said, "choreography they call it; but personally I think this *Cleopatra* ballet rather tiresome, don't you — too long?" And her friends mostly agreed.

But there was one occupant of her box who boldly dissented.

He said simply, "I think *Cleopatra* is the most beautiful spectacle I ever saw."

"Really! I suppose, being a man, you think so because of its *décolletage*."

"No," he retorted, "it is just a superb artistic design, carried out as no stage performance ever is in England, the whole idea and execution being in the hands of artists, directed towards one end — unity."

"So is the grand scene in the pantomime at the Lane, isn't it?" interposed the lady who had come in "just for half an hour."

"If you like, yes, but the difference is essential. It is the difference between the amateur and the professional — say, that of a work by Augustus John and a conventional portrait of a worthy R.A. The one is traditional, commercial; the Russian Ballet is creative."

"I see; but tell me what it is you see that is so beautiful in this *Cleopatra*."

The man, who wore a beard, muttered something inaudible.

"The details," he said, "the harmony, the music, the whole. Take, now, the best things we do on our stage — the musical comedies. Now there are plenty of pretty girls, but they cannot dance. Most of them have had no stage-training at all. Take the music; it is not quite serious, is it? There is some difference between Glazounov's *Bacchanale* and that popular dirge 'Yip-i-addy,' you must admit. Or look at the grouping, the stage arrangements. In *Cleopatra* it it all controlled by an artist. There is a single eye and hand over it all. And then it is a splendid historical illustration, a presentation of Egyptian life in the time of Cleopatra more vivid than a hundred written descriptions, real as the wonderful scene between Cleopatra and the messenger of Shakespeare. Look at these Grecian-Egyptian dances. Think of the processional entry. And that spot of black at the end against the gold silence of the temple. Why, the thing is pulsating with life. All the barbaric splendour of that age is conjured up in that Nilotic pageantry of love. You think it dull. I think it superb, inspiring, absolutely beautiful. You see the best dancing the world can produce. You see a living picture designed by real artists. You have delicious music, delicious col-

our — rhythm. As for the Censor, the man who deems *Cleopatra* immoral had better go down on his knees and pray for a cleaner spirit."

"I don't quite understand," and the Lady Diana turned upon him her famous Luini smile.

"I know. That's it. You think this is a Russian discovery, don't you? You see this house chock-full of people applauding what they consider to be some Muscovite revelation. In part it is. The dancing is Russian, the music is Russian, the splendid unity of design is Russian. But that beautiful blue hanging in *Carneval*, the lighting and colour scheme of the stage that you liked so much in *Pavillon d'Armide*, in *Igor*, in *Spectre de la Rose*, where do you think the idea of that came from? From Paris? From St. Petersburg? You loved *Sumurun*, I know. Well, *Sumurun* was taken from these Russian choreographic ballets — from *Cleopatra*, *Antar*, *Scheherazade*, etc. But where do you imagine the Russians got theirs from? Let me tell you. Ten years ago the Russian ballet had no such thing. It is a new art, and, strange as it may seem to you, it came from England."

The lady who came in late began to think of escape. She had three parties to go on to, and was in no mood for such talk.

"Oh, Bernard Shaw, I suppose," she said; and her remark made the placid man smile all over his face.

"No, not quite," he answered. "The man I am thinking of is the son of indubitably the greatest English actress of our generation, Ellen Terry."

"Really! Now, I never even heard of him," said the Lady Diana.

"Quite so. That is why I am protesting. We don't use our true artists. We seem to have lost the art of seeing art. I repeat, the whole choreographic idea emanated from this artistically ignorant, right-little, tight-little island, and if we had been more perceptive and less insular we should have shown Europe this new stage art instead of obtaining it back second-hand, like a receiver of stolen goods. And yet he revealed it to us. He opened his shop, presented his wares, invited us all, sciolist, patron, critic, and professional, into his sanctuary. We laughed, just as we laughed at Wagner, and still laugh at Ibsen. Our *tarline* standard of art feared and mocked the new idea, and there is nothing the bread-and-butter miss fears more than ideas. We shut down the scuppers and drove the man out of the country. That is what we did."

"Oh, do go on! I simply must know his name."

"You shall, dear Lady Diana," said the man.

"You have seen the new choreographic art. It has conquered Russia, Berlin, Paris, and it is now conquering London. The man who gave that beautiful new stage art to Europe is, as I have said, an Englishman, and his name is Gordon Craig."